

## CLAIMS

We claim:

1           1.     A method for evaluating the performance of a financial advisor comprising:  
2           reading a case prepared by the financial advisor, wherein said case provides  
3           recommendations;  
4           rating said case in a plurality of areas by comparing said case to a predetermined  
5           standard; and  
6           assigning a numerical value for said case in each of said plurality of areas based  
7           on said rating.

2.     The method of claim 1 further comprising repeating said reading, rating, and assigning steps for a plurality of cases for the financial advisor being evaluated.

3.     The method of claim 2, wherein said repeating step is performed by a different person than said reading, comparing, and rating steps.

4.     The method of claim 1 wherein said financial advisor is a member of a larger group of financial advisors, each group comprising a plurality of financial advisors, further comprising:  
          compiling data regarding the ratings of the group.

5.     The method of claim 1 wherein a higher numerical value indicates increased compliance with said predetermined standard.

6.     The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of areas comprises:  
Financial Planning; Financial Position; Protection Planning; Disability; Life Insurance; Long-Term Care; Investment Planning; Tax Planning; Retirement Planning; Estate Planning; Communication; Overall rating.

1           7.       The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of areas comprises:  
2   Cash reserves; Budget/Expenses/Cash Flow/Debt Management; Overall Financial  
3   Position rating; Disability Insurance; Affordability of Disability Insurance  
4   Recommendation; Feasibility of Goal Achievement regarding Disability Insurance  
5   recommendation; Overall rating of Disability Insurance section; Affordability of Life  
6   Insurance Recommendation; Feasibility of Goal Achievement regarding Life Insurance  
7   recommendation; Overall rating of Life Insurance section; Affordability of Long-Term  
8   Care Recommendation; Feasibility of Goal Achievement regarding Long-Term Care  
9   Recommendation; Overall rating of Long-term Care section; Affordability of Investment  
10   Planning Recommendation; Documentation of risk tolerance of the client; Exploration of  
11   tax ramifications of Investment Planning recommendation; Feasibility of Goal  
12   Achievement regarding investment planning recommendation; Overall rating of  
13   Investment Planning section; Advice with respect to Tax-qualified investments; Advice  
14   with respect to Tax-deferred investments; Advice with respect to Tax-exempt  
15   investment; Advice regarding tax effect of liquidating certain investments; Advice  
16   regarding the hiring of a tax advisor; Overall rating of Tax Planning section; Affordability  
17   of Retirement Planning Recommendation; Documentation of risk tolerance regarding  
18   Retirement Planning; Exploration of tax ramifications of Retirement Planning  
19   Recommendation; Feasibility of Goal Achievement regarding Retirement Planning  
20   Recommendation; Overall rating of Retirement Planning section; Advice regarding wills,  
21   trusts, or other estate planning techniques; Advice regarding beneficiary designations  
22   and/or ownership issues; Advice regarding Estate Tax situation; Advice regarding the  
23   hiring of an estate planning attorney; Overall rating of Estate Planning section; Linkage  
24   of various financial planning areas to another; Organization and presentation; Statement  
25   of sources of information and/or assumptions; and Overall rating of the work-product.

          8.       The method of claim 1 wherein said reading, rating, and assigning steps  
are completed by a plurality of people.

          9.       The method of claim 1 wherein said reading, rating, and assigning steps  
are completed by a plurality of financial advisors.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein said reading, rating, and assigning steps are completed for each case in a subset of all cases produced by the financial advisor during a predetermined time period.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein said numerical value comprises a numerical rating that is an integer selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5; and wherein:

a numerical rating of 1 in a particular category indicates that the advice in that category is considered questionable;

a numerical rating of 2 in a particular category indicates that the advice in that category is considered limited;

a numerical rating of 3 in a particular category indicates that the advice in that category is reasonably informative with respect to any actions that are recommended;

a numerical rating of 4 in a particular category indicates that the advice in that category details the reasons for the recommendation of a particular action and the manner in which an action should be performed; and

a numerical rating of 5 in a particular category indicates that the advice in that category sufficiently provides an analysis of alternative courses of actions in addition to detailing the reasons for the recommendation of a particular action.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising:  
providing negative feedback to said financial advisor if said numerical rating in a any of said plurality of categories is at least one of 1 and 2.

13. A method for evaluating the performance of a financial advisor comprising:  
selecting a case prepared by the financial advisor, wherein said case provides recommendations;  
selecting a first assessor and a second assessor;  
rating said case in a plurality of areas by comparing said case to a predetermined standard;

7 assigning a first numerical value for said case in each of said plurality of areas  
8 based on said rating by said first assessor;

9 assigning a second numerical value for said case in each of said plurality of  
10 areas based on said rating by said second assessor; and

11 comparing said first numerical value to said second numerical value in one of  
12 said plurality of areas.

1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein said first numerical value is not equal to  
2 said second numerical value, said method further comprising:

3 selecting an arbitrator;

4 rating said case in a plurality of areas by comparing said case to a predetermined  
5 standard;

6 assigning a third numerical value for said case in each of said plurality of areas  
7 based on said rating by said arbitrator; and

8 finalizing said rating based on said third numerical value.

15. An evaluation system used to measure written work-product comprising:  
a plurality of categories in which the work-product is to be rated; and  
a rating scale with which to evaluate said work-product.

16. The evaluation system of claim 15 wherein said rating scale consists of  
integers ranging from 1 to 5.

1 17. The evaluation system of claim 15 in which said plurality of categories  
2 comprises:

3 Cash reserves; Budget/Expenses/Cash Flow/Debt Management; Overall  
4 Financial Position rating; Disability Insurance; Affordability of Disability Insurance  
5 Recommendation; Feasibility of Goal Achievement regarding Disability Insurance  
6 recommendation; Overall rating of Disability Insurance section; Affordability of Life  
7 Insurance Recommendation; Feasibility of Goal Achievement regarding Life Insurance  
8 recommendation; Overall rating of Life Insurance section; Affordability of Long-Term

9 Care Recommendation; Feasibility of Goal Achievement regarding Long-Term Care  
10 Recommendation; Overall rating of Long-term Care section; Affordability of Investment  
11 Planning Recommendation; Documentation of risk tolerance of the client; Exploration of  
12 tax ramifications of Investment Planning recommendation; Feasibility of Goal  
13 Achievement regarding investment planning recommendation; Overall rating of  
14 Investment Planning section; Advice with respect to Tax-qualified investments; Advice  
15 with respect to Tax-deferred investments; Advice with respect to Tax-exempt  
16 investment; Advice regarding tax effect of liquidating certain investments; Advice  
17 regarding the hiring of a tax advisor; Overall rating of Tax Planning section; Affordability  
18 of Retirement Planning Recommendation; Documentation of risk tolerance regarding  
19 Retirement Planning; Exploration of tax ramifications of Retirement Planning  
20 Recommendation; Feasibility of Goal Achievement regarding Retirement Planning  
21 Recommendation; Overall rating of Retirement Planning section; Advice regarding wills,  
22 trusts, or other estate planning techniques; Advice regarding beneficiary designations  
23 and/or ownership issues; Advice regarding Estate Tax situation; Advice regarding the  
24 hiring of an estate planning attorney; Overall rating of Estate Planning section; Linkage  
25 of various financial planning areas to another; Organization and presentation; Statement  
26 of sources of information and/or assumptions; Overall rating of the work-product.